

Why Moving Forward with the Feldenkrais Method

Movement is essential for healthy functioning. With limitations in movement, healthy function and daily activities are compromised. The Feldenkrais Method offers an effective means to improve posture, flexibility and coordination, and to help those with restricted movement, chronic tension and pain, neurological problems, and everyone wishing to live more comfortably. The Feldenkrais Method is a unique approach to human change, acclaimed for its ability to access the power of the brain to improve many areas of human functioning, and is uniquely suited to help elders improve improve their quality of life.

***Feldenkrais Exercises or Awareness Through Movement* ®**

Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement (*ATM*) exercises or 'lessons' are easy to do, of benefit to everyone, and the results can be immediate and profound. These unique exercises were developed as a means to re-engage the nervous system in the fundamental learning process we all have access to as children, but lose as we get older. The exercises are structured to take advantage of the natural neuroplasticity of the brain, through stimulating both the motor and learning centers. They employ innovative movement sequences that address every area of the body and all aspects of human motor function.

The Benefits of the Feldenkrais exercises are:

- Ability to move more easily and comfortably.
- Improved co-ordination, posture and flexibility.
- Relief from aches and pains.
- Reduced stress and improved relaxation.
- Ability to restore lost function.
- Renewed physical vitality, and emotional well-being.
- Ability to avoid injury and recover more quickly from them.
- Greater ease and pleasure in all your physical activities.
- Improved fitness and agility of your brain.
- Restored confidence in one's balance and stability.

The Class Format and Content

The Moving Forward with the Feldenkrais Method: Flexibility, Balance and Pain Relief for Seniors exercise program is based in part on *Relaxercise: An Introduction to the Feldenkrais Method* (HarperCollins) by David Zemach-Bersin and Mark Reese. Only certified *Feldenkrais* Practitioners will teach the classes, and the team of teachers will be trained directly by David Zemach-Bersin.

The exercises featured in the classes are designed especially for elder citizens, and are non-stressful, gentle, easy-to-do and comfortable. *Feldenkrais* exercises can be designed for any age group, and can be done while sitting in a chair, or while lying on exercise mats. The course curriculum is ideal for a 6 week series that meets twice a week, but we can design any format which meets the needs of your institution. Each session lasts approximately 45-60 minutes. Participants will need to wear comfortable clothing.

I am deeply impressed by the Feldenkrais exercises. I am 78 years old and can't handle most exercise programs. But, the Feldenkrais exercises are the most effective, easy to follow system I have ever tried. It is amazing how quickly there is an improvement.

Edith Weiss

Moving Forward with the Feldenkrais Method Senior Class Titles

1. Easy Flexibility
2. Low Back Comfort
3. A Healthy Spine
4. Relaxed Shoulders
5. Your Power Center
6. Better Balance I
7. Full Breathing
8. Flexible Feet
9. Face and Jaw Relaxation
10. Dynamic Sitting
11. Easier Walking
12. Better Posture

The lessons are designed to improve ability, that is, to expand the boundaries of the possible, to turn the impossible into the possible, the difficult into the easy and the easy into the pleasant. For only those activities that are easy and pleasant will be part of a person's habitual life and serve them at all times.

Moshe Feldenkrais

The Feldenkrais Method has totally changed the way I see myself, especially in relation to pain. I went from using a wheelchair to walking two miles most every day. Most of my mental energy was focused on how to live with pain. Now I have extraordinary mental freedom, and each day I am finding new things that I can do.

Margaret Fletcher, M.D,
Retired spokesperson and educator for the American Arthritis Foundation
who has had rheumatoid arthritis for 45 years

Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais has developed a system that is many years ahead of conventional medical understanding.

Martin Rossman, M.D., Author, 'Healing Yourself'

The Feldenkrais Method is a remarkable, quick, and effective way to alleviate muscular tension, pain, and discomforts.

James Rice, M.D.

The Feldenkrais Method is an extraordinarily effective approach to the enhancement of posture, balance, movement and behavior.

Sandy Burkhart, PT, Ph.D.

After suffering a serious stroke 10 years ago, my doctor told me I would never walk again. Thanks to the Feldenkrais Method I am still walking today.

Dora Good, M.A., School Teacher

Relevant Evidence Based Research on the Feldenkrais Method (more studies and data available @ feldenkraisfoundation.org)

Learning to Improve Mobility and Quality of Life in a Well Elderly Population: The Benefits of Awareness Through Movement. Feldenkrais Research Journal. 2, 17. 2005. Stephens, PhD, PT, CFP; J., Pendergast, BA, MPT;
Objectives: This study tested the hypothesis that an alternative movement learning method, *Awareness Through Movement*, would produce improvements in coordination, mobility, economy of movement and quality of life in older adults. Conclusions: Coordination of the transfer movement improved significantly in the experimental group. Vitality and mental health scores also improved significantly in this group. *Awareness Through Movement* may be an additional effective method for pursuing the objectives of healthy people.

Feldenkrais Method balance classes are based on principles of motor learning and postural control retraining: a qualitative study.

Physiotherapy Dec 2010, Connors K, Galea M, Said, C, Remdios L.
Objectives: The purpose of this study was to analyse the content of a series of Feldenkrais Method balance classes to gain an understanding of how the results in these studies may have been achieved and the principles through which it may be effective. Conclusion: The Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement lessons contained many elements consistent with current theories of motor skill acquisition and postural control, providing a sound theoretical basis for the effectiveness of the Feldenkrais approach in improving balance.

Effects of Feldenkrais Exercises on balance, mobility, balance confidence and gait performance in community-dwelling adults age 65 and older.

Journal of Complementary and Alternative Therapies, 16: 97-105, 2010, Ullmann G, Williams H, Hussey J, Durstine J, McClenaghan B.
Objective: The purpose of this study was to examine effects of Feldenkrais exercises in improving balance, mobility, and balance confidence in older adults. Conclusions: These results indicate that Feldenkrais exercises are an effective way to improve balance and mobility, and thus offer an alternative method to help offset age-related declines in mobility and reduce the risk of falling among community-dwelling older adults.

Getting Grounded Gracefully: effectiveness of Feldenkrais in improving balance.

Journal of Aging and Physical Activity 17(1): 57-76, 2009; Vrantsidis F, Hill K, Moore K, Webb R, Hunt S, Dowson L.
The Getting Grounded Gracefully program, based on the Feldenkrais Method, was designed to improve balance and function in older people. Significant improvement was identified for the intervention group relative to the control group for the Modified Falls Efficacy Scale score ($p = 0.003$) and gait speed ($p = 0.028$), and a strong trend evident in the Timed Up and Go ($p = 0.056$). High class attendance (88%) and survey feedback indicate that the program was viewed positively by participants and may therefore be acceptable to other older people.

Feldenkrais Method balance classes improve balance in older adults.

Evidence Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine Advance published online 24 June 2009. Connors K, Galea M, Said C. Objective: To investigate the effects of Feldenkrais Method balance classes on balance and mobility in older adults. Conclusions: These findings suggest that Feldenkrais Method balance classes may improve mobility and balance in older adults.

Effects of Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement on Balance in Adults With Chronic Neurological Deficits Following Stroke: A Preliminary Study.

Complementary Health Practice Review, Vol. 10 No. 3, October 2005 Sage Publications. Peer Reviewed. Batson G and Deutsch J.
The Feldenkrais Method is a complementary approach to motor learning that purports to induce change in chronic motor behaviors. This preliminary study describes the effects of a Feldenkrais program on balance and quality of life in individuals with chronic neurological deficits following stroke. Findings suggest that gains in functional mobility are possible for individuals with chronic stroke using Feldenkrais movement therapy in a group setting.

Moshe Feldenkrais, D.Sc.

Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais' method will be of great benefit to all of humanity. From my own experience I know the remarkable results achieved.

David Ben-Gurion, First Prime Minister of Israel

The *Feldenkrais Method* was developed by Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais, (1904-1984), a distinguished physicist and engineer. Feldenkrais studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, France, and was a close associate of Nobel Laureate, Frederic Joliot-Curie, at the Curie Institute in Paris. In the early 1940's, Feldenkrais found himself unable to walk due to a serious injury, and thus began an intense study of the relationship between movement, healing and learning. Feldenkrais not only restored his ability to walk, but also made revolutionary discoveries that culminated in the development of the method that bears his name.

The Feldenkrais Foundation

The *Feldenkrais* Foundation is devoted to promoting the *Feldenkrais Method*, supporting scientific research, as well as bringing the *Feldenkrais Method* to underserved populations, such as seniors and victims of stroke. Activities include a low-fee clinic, and developing programs that use the *Feldenkrais Method* to remediate balance issues in the elderly, MS, scoliosis, and stroke recovery.

Feldenkrais Foundation Staff

Anat Meiri - Executive Director and Faculty

Anat Meiri has been a *Feldenkrais* Practitioner since 2009. She began her *Feldenkrais Method* Professional Training in 2003 in Berkeley, CA, and before that danced professionally with Rina Schinfeld Dance Theatre in Tel-Aviv, and with the Deborah Slater Dance Theatre Co., Papas and Dancers and the Peck-Peck Dance Ensemble.

David Zemach Bersin – Co-Founder, Program Director

David Zemach-Bersin studied closely with Dr. Feldenkrais from 1973-1984 and is the co-founder of The *Feldenkrais* Institute of New York. David is Director of the New York City, and Baltimore *Feldenkrais Method* Training Programs, and has presented the *Feldenkrais Method* widely. He is an Honors graduate of UC Berkeley, and the co-author of *Relaxercise* (HarperCollins),

Marek Wyszynski – Co-Founder, Clinical Director

Marek Wyszynski is a Physical Therapist, *Feldenkrais* Practitioner and past supervisor of the Pain Treatment Program at Lenox Hill Hospital. He is co-founder of the *Feldenkrais* Institute, and author of many articles, including 'Feldenkrais Method for People with Chronic Pain' in the journal of The American Academy of Pain Management. Marek is Director of *Feldenkrais* NYC, a member of Hospital for Special Surgery Rehabilitation Network.

The Feldenkrais Method is an incredible, quick and easy tool, and a must for anyone who suffers from chronic pain and tension, and loss of flexibility.

Alex Shester, M.D.